

A1 11. (Amended) An image processing method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the predetermined region to be subjected to noise removal in the noise removal step is an assembly of pixels in the vicinity of a boundary of each block.

A2 20. (Amended) An image processing apparatus as defined in Claim 12 further comprising:
image decoding means for decoding an image code sequence to generate a decoded image;
said noise detection means receiving the image code sequence, and performing noise detection using information included in the image code sequence; and
said noise removal means removing noise from the decoded image outputted from the image decoding means, on the basis of the result of the noise detection.

21. (Amended) An image processing apparatus as defined in Claim 12, wherein said noise is one of blocking artifact and ringing artifact.

22. (Amended) An image processing apparatus as defined in Claim 12, wherein the predetermined region to be subjected to noise removal by the noise removal means is an assembly of pixels in the vicinity of a boundary of each block.

Please add the following new claims:

A3 23. An image processing method as defined in Claim 2 further comprising:
image decoding step of decoding an image code sequence to generate a decoded image;
said noise detection step of performing noise detection using information included in the image code sequence; and

said noise removal step of removing noise from the decoded image obtained in the image decoding step, on the basis of the result of the noise detection.

24. An image processing method as defined in Claim 3 further comprising:

image decoding step of decoding an image code sequence to generate a decoded image;
said noise detection step of performing noise detection using information included in the
image code sequence; and
said noise removal step of removing noise from the decoded image obtained in the image
decoding step, on the basis of the result of the noise detection.

25. An image processing method as defined in Claim 4 further comprising:
image decoding step of decoding an image code sequence to generate a decoded image;
said noise detection step of performing noise detection using information included in the
image code sequence; and
said noise removal step of removing noise from the decoded image obtained in the image
decoding step, on the basis of the result of the noise detection.

26. An image processing method as defined in Claim 5 further comprising:
image decoding step of decoding an image code sequence to generate a decoded image;
said noise detection step of performing noise detection using information included in the
image code sequence; and
said noise removal step of removing noise from the decoded image obtained in the image
decoding step, on the basis of the result of the noise detection.

27. An image processing method as defined in Claim 6 further comprising:
image decoding step of decoding an image code sequence to generate a decoded image;
said noise detection step of performing noise detection using information included in the
image code sequence; and
said noise removal step of removing noise from the decoded image obtained in the image
decoding step, on the basis of the result of the noise detection.

28. An image processing method as defined in Claim 2, wherein said noise is one of blocking artifact and ringing artifact.

29. An image processing method as defined in Claim 3, wherein said noise is one of blocking artifact and ringing artifact.

30. An image processing method as defined in Claim 4, wherein said noise is one of blocking artifact and ringing artifact.

A3 31. An image processing method as defined in Claim 5, wherein said noise is one of blocking artifact and ringing artifact.

32. An image processing method as defined in Claim 6, wherein said noise is one of blocking artifact and ringing artifact.

33. An image processing method as defined in Claim 2, wherein the predetermined region to be subjected to noise removal in the noise removal step is an assembly of pixels in the vicinity of a boundary of each block.

34. An image processing method as defined in Claim 3, wherein the predetermined region to be subjected to noise removal in the noise removal step is an assembly of pixels in the vicinity of a boundary of each block.

35. An image processing method as defined in Claim 4, wherein the predetermined region to be subjected to noise removal in the noise removal step is an assembly of pixels in the vicinity of a boundary of each block.

36. An image processing method as defined in Claim 5, wherein the predetermined region to be subjected to noise removal in the noise removal step is an assembly of pixels in the vicinity of a boundary of each block.

37. An image processing method as defined in Claim 6, wherein the predetermined region to be subjected to noise removal in the noise removal step is an assembly of pixels in the vicinity of a boundary of each block.

43 38. An image processing apparatus as defined in Claim 13 further comprising:
image decoding means for decoding an image code sequence to generate a decoded image;
said noise detection means receiving the image code sequence, and performing noise detection using information included in the image code sequence; and
said noise removal means removing noise from the decoded image outputted from the image decoding means, on the basis of the result of the noise detection.

39. An image processing apparatus as defined in Claim 14 further comprising:
image decoding means for decoding an image code sequence to generate a decoded image;
said noise detection means receiving the image code sequence, and performing noise detection using information included in the image code sequence; and
said noise removal means removing noise from the decoded image outputted from the image decoding means, on the basis of the result of the noise detection.

40. An image processing apparatus as defined in Claim 15 further comprising:
image decoding means for decoding an image code sequence to generate a decoded image;
said noise detection means receiving the image code sequence, and performing noise detection using information included in the image code sequence; and
said noise removal means removing noise from the decoded image outputted from the image decoding means, on the basis of the result of the noise detection.

41. An image processing apparatus as defined in Claim 16 further comprising:
image decoding means for decoding an image code sequence to generate a decoded image;
said noise detection means receiving the image code sequence, and performing noise detection
using information included in the image code sequence; and
said noise removal means removing noise from the decoded image outputted from the image
decoding means, on the basis of the result of the noise detection.

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42. An image processing apparatus as defined in Claim 17 further comprising:
image decoding means for decoding an image code sequence to generate a decoded image;
said noise detection means receiving the image code sequence, and performing noise detection
using information included in the image code sequence; and
said noise removal means removing noise from the decoded image outputted from the image
decoding means, on the basis of the result of the noise detection.

43. An image processing apparatus as defined in Claim 13, wherein said noise is one of
blocking artifact and ringing artifact.

44. An image processing apparatus as defined in Claim 14, wherein said noise is one of
blocking artifact and ringing artifact.

45. An image processing apparatus as defined in Claim 15, wherein said noise is one of
blocking artifact and ringing artifact.

46. An image processing apparatus as defined in Claim 16, wherein said noise is one of
blocking artifact and ringing artifact.

47. An image processing apparatus as defined in Claim 17, wherein said noise is one of
blocking artifact and ringing artifact.

48. An image processing apparatus as defined in Claim 13, wherein the predetermined region to be subjected to noise removal by the noise removal means is an assembly of pixels in the vicinity of a boundary of each block.

A3 49. An image processing apparatus as defined in Claim 14, wherein the predetermined region to be subjected to noise removal by the noise removal means is an assembly of pixels in the vicinity of a boundary of each block.

50. An image processing apparatus as defined in Claim 15, wherein the predetermined region to be subjected to noise removal by the noise removal means is an assembly of pixels in the vicinity of a boundary of each block.

51. An image processing apparatus as defined in Claim 16, wherein the predetermined region to be subjected to noise removal by the noise removal means is an assembly of pixels in the vicinity of a boundary of each block.

52. An image processing apparatus as defined in Claim 17, wherein the predetermined region to be subjected to noise removal by the noise removal means is an assembly of pixels in the vicinity of a boundary of each block.
